

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Date: 9/1/2011

GAIN Report Number: IT1139

Italy

Post: Rome

Preview 2011 Italian Wine Quality Up but Quantity Down

Report Categories:

Wine

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Report Highlights:

Assoenologi, the Italian Association of Enologists, is forecasting that the 2011 Italian wine harvest will be of "excellent quality," even though total wine production is expected to be a little less than last year. Italian wine producers have touted this good news as a much-needed boost, especially since domestic wine sales have been declining. Italy's grape harvest began early this year due to warmer seasonal temperatures and winemakers are expecting the season to reinforce Italy's position as the world's leading wine producer.

General Information:

MORE "QUALITY" BUT LESS QUANTITY

Assoenologi, the Italian Association of Enologists, is forecasting that the 2011 Italian wine harvest will be of "excellent quality," even though total wine production is expected to be a little less than last year due to high summer temperatures and grubbing up in Sicily. Italian wine producers have touted this good news as a much-needed boost, especially since domestic wine sales have been declining. Italy's grape harvest began early this year due to warmer seasonal temperatures and winemakers are expecting the season to reinforce Italy's position as the world's leading wine producer.

WINE PRODUCTION AND HARVEST FORECASTS

Assoenologi is forecasting Italy will produce 44 million hectoliters of wine and musts in 2011, just over 5% below 2010 production of 47 million hectoliters. Wine production in Italy is divided into two main wine areas. Production in the Centre-North area (up to Tuscany) is expected to be stable, while the South Centre (from Marche to Sicily) is expected to register a slight decrease. Sardinia however stands alone with an unprecedented 15% increase in wine production. Overall, Assoenologi expects Italy's total 2011 wine production to decrease due to high summer temperatures and the abandonment in Sicily of more than 2,000 hectares of vineyards as part of the grubbing-up schemes (i.e., the total destruction or removal of grape bunches while still in their immature stage, thereby reducing the yield of the relevant area to zero per EC Reg. 479/2008) of more than 11,000 hectares.

In 2010 Italian wine grape area was 684,000 hectares. The Veneto, with its' 8.37 million hectoliters of wine, was Italy's most productive region for the fifth consecutive year. Veneto, Emilia Romagna, Puglia, and Sicily together produce 26 million hectoliters or about 60% of Italian wine. About one-third of Italy's wine production is Controlled Appellation wines (DOC and DOCG), most of which are produced in northern and, to a lesser extent, central regions.

WINE CONSUMPTION

According to Assoenologi, 2010 Italian wine consumption totaled about 43 liters per capita, compared with 47 in 2007. This declining trend in consumption is common throughout the EU, despite a slight economic recovery. Causes for the trend include changing lifestyles (increased outdoor drinking, substitution of other beverages, changing tastes), anti-alcohol drinking campaigns, and health concerns.

FOR MORE POST REPORTING ON WINE PLEASE SEE:

IT1105 – Annual EU Wine Report and Statistics

IT1017- Italians Sequence Corvina Amarone Genome

IT 8036 – Understanding Italian Wine Labels

IT8035 - Italy Taking on French Wines by Promoting Home Grown Varietals

IT8034 - Italian Ministry of Agriculture Contemplating Creation of an Anthocyanin Database

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